



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

## KOOTENAY "MEDICINE-MEN."

ABOUT the shamans of some of the less known tribes of American Indians very little is on record. Among the Kootenays of south-eastern British Columbia and northern Idaho the name of the "medicine-man," or shaman, is *nípi'k'ak'ák'ā*, a word derived from *nípi'k'a*, "spirit," because he has to do with "spirits," or the forms in which the dead may appear to the living. The "singing" of the shaman is termed *k'ánúkkunanúkanámnam*, which word is sometimes applied to the whole "medicine" procedure. The word *āwú'mō*, "medicine," is also in use, but the expression *āwú'mō tít kāt* (literally "medicine-man") seems to be a neologism, suggested perhaps by corresponding expressions in the language of the whites; it is not quite "good Kootenay."

The actions of the Kootenay shaman have been described by Dr. Franz Boas, who visited these Indians in 1888, as follows:<sup>1</sup> "The shamans of the Kutonáqa are also initiated in the woods after long fasting. They cure sick people, and prophesy the result of hunting and war parties. If this is to be done, the shaman ties a rope about his waist, and goes into the medicine-lodge, where he is covered with an elk-skin. After a short while he appears, his thumbs firmly tied together by a knot, which is very difficult to open. He reënters the lodge, and, after a short time, reappears, his thumbs being untied. After he has been tied a second time, he is put into a blanket, which is firmly tied together like a bag. The line which is tied around his waist, and to which his thumbs are fastened, may be seen protruding from the place where the blanket is tied together. Before he is tied up, a piece of bone is placed between his toes. Then the men pull at the protruding end of the rope, which gives way; the blanket is removed, and the shaman is seen to lie under it. This performance is called *k'eqnemnám* (=somebody cut in two). The shaman remains silent, and reënters the lodge, in which rattles made of pieces of bone are heard. Suddenly something is heard falling down. Three times this noise is repeated, and then singing is heard in the lodge. It is supposed that the shaman has invoked souls of certain people whom he wished to see, and that their arrival produced the noise. From these he obtains the information and instructions which he later on communicates to the people."

When the present writer was among the Kootenays in 1891,<sup>2</sup> one member of the tribe gave the following free translation of a "medicine" song: "An Indian is crouching in the corner of his lodge beneath blankets, invoking the spirits. Soon the spirit enters

<sup>1</sup> *Rep. Brit. Assoc. Adv. Sci.*, 1889.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 1892.

through the top of the lodge, passes beneath the blanket, and enters the Indian, who then flies away on high; by-and-by returns, and, sitting under the blanket, causes the spirit to depart again." This Indian applied the term *kek'áqnámnam* to the whole procedure under the blanket. According to another informant, the "spirits" assume the form of some beast or bird, in which state the adept can summon them, and commune with them. The Kootenay "medium" gets behind a blanket in the tepee, as noted above, and summons the spirit to him, and, while under the blanket, imitates the voice, etc., of the beast or bird in whose form the spirit appears. The "spirit" is supposed to "fall down" through the smoke-hole of the lodge. The advent of the blanket (*sēet* or *tlāmātl*) has driven out the elk-skin (*āqk'ō'kēllā gītēk'ātlēs*) which was formerly the cover under which the shaman ensconced himself. With many Indian tribes the elk has always been great or good "medicine;" hence, perhaps the use of its skin here. In accordance with the general democratic character of Kootenay institutions, the coming and going of "spirits" is not bound up with intervention of the shaman, whose art has, nevertheless, been looked upon, in recent times, at least, as more efficacious. Probably, at an earlier stage in the history of these people, all persons of a seasonable age could "traffic with the spirits." It would not be surprising if not a little of the paraphernalia and *modi operandi* of the "medicine-man" among the Kootenays turns out to be borrowed from neighboring tribes.

A part of the business of the shaman was to predict the outcome of hunting and war expeditions, and in some of his efforts he had the assistance practically of the whole tribe, as, *e. g.* at the dance in the "great lodge" in winter, when good snow for game is "prayed for." The older midnight dance, occurring about Christmas time, is characterized as *mitqālltēkētl*, evidently a derivative from *mitqanē*, "he shoots," from the fact that guns were fired off, etc., during the celebration, in which much clapping of hands also took place. Among the Upper Kootenays the Roman Catholic missionaries have made a rather successful attempt to divert some of the energy formerly expended on the "great winter dance," to a recognition of the Christian holy day occurring at approximately the same time. But while they celebrate the Christmas of the whites, these Indians have not altogether forgotten the festival of their forefathers. Still less have the Lower Kootenays, who are much more "pagan" than their kindred farther "up country."

Concerning the "cure" of the shaman, Rev. W. F. Wilson<sup>1</sup> writes thus: "In cases of sickness these people have more faith in sorcery than in the use of medicines. They believe that some evil spirit has

<sup>1</sup> *Our Forest Children*, vol. iii. (1889-1890), p. 165.

caused the sickness, and that the evil spirit must be driven out. The patient usually is stretched on his back in the centre of a large lodge, and his friends sit round in a circle, beating drums. The sorcerer, grotesquely painted, enters the ring, chanting a song, and proceeds to force the evil spirit from the sick person by pressing both clenched fists with all his might in the pit of his stomach, kneading and pounding also other parts of the body, blowing occasionally through his fingers, and sucking blood from the part supposed to be affected."

The Kootenay shaman, as is the case with the "medicine-men" of many other tribes, seems to have been at one and the same time medium, doctor, and prophet.

That the doings of the Kootenay shamans made considerable impression upon the missionaries may readily be believed from the statement attributed to a Jesuit missionary in 1861:<sup>1</sup> "I have seen many exhibitions of power which my philosophy cannot explain. I have known predictions of events far in the future to be literally fulfilled, and have seen medicine-men tested in the most conclusive ways. I once saw a Kootenia Indian (known generally as Skookum-tamahere-wos,<sup>2</sup> from his extraordinary power) command a mountain sheep to fall dead, and the animal, then leaping among the rocks of the mountain-side, fell instantly lifeless. This I saw with my own eyes, and I ate of the animal afterwards. It was unwounded, healthy, and perfectly wild. Ah, Mary save us! the *medicine-men* have power from Sathanas."

During his stay among the Kootenays in the summer and autumn of 1891, the present writer obtained from various members of the tribe a considerable number of drawings of all kinds. Among these are two which the Indian who drew them said represented "medicine-men." The artist of these drawings was Bläswā, one of the oldest men of the Upper Kootenays, formerly a great warrior, and reputed as having been more skilful with the bow and arrow in the days of intertribal warfare than with the pencil to-day. The drawings were made with no interference or suggestion on the part of the writer, and may be taken as fair specimens of the Indian's artistic accomplishments. The first of the drawings occupied twenty, the second seventeen minutes in execution.

*Drawing No. 1.* This picture represents one of the Kootenay shamans or "medicine-men," arrayed as he appears in the great dance. He has on, apparently, the special "shirt" of the shaman, while his head is adorned with the "horns" of weasel fur, etc., for-

<sup>1</sup> E. R. Emerson, *Indian Myths* (Boston, 1884), p. 404.

<sup>2</sup> This is evidently a misprint for *Skookum tamahnewus* (*skúkem tamánowas*), the term in the Chinook jargon for "strong sorcerer."

merly so much esteemed. It is not certain what he carries in his extended hand.

*Drawing No. 2.* This is a very curious picture. The artist who drew it said it was another "medicine-man" picture, and did not differentiate it particularly from the other drawing of a shaman. In the left hand is a small cup or basket (?) — the word *âtsûndnâ*, originally applied to a small (*nâna*) bag or basket (*âtsû*) of birch-bark, etc., has come to be used for cups and receptacles of a like sort — containing "medicine" (*âwîmô*). In the right hand is some other article. The expression on the face, the beard, the outstretched arms, etc., suggest that the Indian has here given us a copy of the figure on the cross or crucifix seen at the Mission of St. Eugène, or in the possession of some of the Catholic missionaries. Perhaps the article in the left hand is the communion cup, and that in the right, the consecrated bread. In his second attempt to picture a shaman the old Indian had before his mind the Catholic priest and the figure of Christ upon the crucifix, the result being the very interesting picture here presented. This drawing, therefore, may belong to the class of art products which reflect the contact of pagan religious ideas with the new concepts introduced by missionaries of the Christian faith.

Some remarkable examples of such have been very recently discussed by Dr. Karl von den Steinen.<sup>1</sup> In the pipe-carvings of the Payaguás, which deal with the Garden of Eden and the Creation of Adam, it is the Deity who is represented by the unmistakable figure of a shaman in characteristic action and attitude. In connection with these phenomena, it is interesting to find Dr. Boas writing of the Nootka Indians of Vancouver Island :<sup>2</sup> "The name of the deity is kept a profound secret from the common people. Only chiefs are allowed to pray to him, and the dying chief tells the name, which is Kátse (*i. e.* the grandchild), to his heir, and teaches him how to pray to the deity. No offerings are made to Kátse ; he is only prayed to. In a tradition of the Nootka it is stated that a boy prayed to a being in heaven called Ciciklê, who is probably identical with Kátse. The boy is described as praying, his arms being thrown upward." Now *Ciciklê* is neither more nor less than *Jésus Christ*, and reveals the fact of French missionary influence ; for in the Kootenay language, the speakers of which first came into contact with French missionaries of the Catholic faith, *Jésus Christ* is rendered by the Indians *Cícēklē*.

There is need for a comparative study of the influence of Chris-

<sup>1</sup> Der Paradiesgarten als Schnitzmotiv der Payaguá-Indianer. *Ethnol. Notizbl.*, Bd. ii. (1901), pp. 60-65.

<sup>2</sup> *Rep. Brit. Assoc. Adv. Sci.*, 1890.

FIG. 1. This drawing represents the "Medicine-man" of the Kootenays, as he appears when taking part in the "great dance." He wears the special "shirt" of the shaman, and his head is adorned with the "horns" of weasel fur, characteristic of his office.



FIG. 2. This drawing was said by the Indian who made it to represent a "Medicine-man." If so, it must be what the Indians call the "Medicine-Man" of the whites that is pictured here. The beard, the expression on the face, the outstretched arms, and the general character of the drawing indicate that the idea of the figure on the crucifix (the Upper Kootenays are under Catholic influence) and of the priest presided over its execution.

tianity, as introduced from time to time among the Indians by missionaries of different faiths and languages, upon the religious concepts of the aborigines, and of the literary and artistic effects of this contact.

*Alexander F. Chamberlain.*

CLARK UNIVERSITY, WORCESTER, MASS.